



THE CITY OF
SURPRISE, ARIZONA
SEEKS AN EXPERIENCED,
CREATIVE, POLITICALLY ASTUTE
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The rapidly growing City of Surprise, Arizona, located in the northwest quadrant of the greater Phoenix Metropolitan Area, is a city on the move. The City has experienced phenomenal growth, booming from a population of 39,000 in the year 2000 to its current population of approximately 100,000, with a projected build out of 263,000 by 2020. The City seeks a hands-on local government communications professional who is energized by a diversity of challenges, has the ability to develop and disseminate information to keep the growing citizenry educated, and the political acumen to work effectively with elected officials, City staff, and community stakeholders.

THE COMMUNITY

Surprise is 25 minutes northwest of downtown Phoenix along U.S. Route 60. Incorporated in 1960, the name "Surprise" came from Surprise, Nebraska, hometown of the City's founder, Homer C. Ludden. What was once a small farming village now encompasses 76 square miles, including urban and commercial developments, ranches and industrial parks. The City's planning area consists of 228 square miles—nearly half the size of the City of Los Angeles.

Diverse neighborhoods, a mixture of families and retirees, affordable and executive housing, an ample water supply, golf courses, a solid school system, and growing industrial base

help to create for Surprise residents a very satisfying environment in which to live, work and play. At its center is the 180-acre, multi-award winning Surprise Recreation Campus. Completed in 2002 and named by Phoenix New Times 2004 as the "Best Place to see a Spring Training Game," the Recreation Campus is the Cactus League home of the Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers, while also serving as the home base to a vibrant youth sports program and spectacular special events. Surprise is one of the Valley's most attractive cities for residential, commercial and industrial development. Over 70 percent of the City's residents are under the age of 65, making it one of the younger communities in the Phoenix area.

With an average of over 330 days of sunshine a year, Surprise offers a healthy indoor and outdoor lifestyle. There are more than 100 golf courses in the greater Phoenix area (including eight in Surprise), plus professional football, baseball and basketball teams as well as spring training facilities for major league baseball teams. Arizona State University in nearby Tempe provides numerous educational, cultural and athletic opportunities for area residents. Arizona State University West in Glendale, and Estrella Mountain Community College are each just 20 minutes from Surprise. Immediately adjacent to Surprise is the *Sundome*, which regularly hosts major entertainers and lecturers.

CITY GOVERNMENT

The City of Surprise operates under a Council/Manager form of government. The seven-member City Council is elected to staggered four-year terms. Each City Council member represents an election district, with the exception of the Mayor, who is elected at-large. It is the responsibility of the City Council to set policy.

The City Manager is appointed by the City Council. The City Manager serves as chief executive officer of the City organization. It is his responsibility to manage the organization and carry out the policies of the City Council.

The City Council is also responsible for the appointments of the City Clerk, City Attorney, and Municipal Judge. Surprise has 540 full-time employees, 740 total employees, and a total FY 2005-2006 budget of \$335 million.

The City's statement of values recognizes a commitment to citizens, integrity, community pride, professionalism, teamwork, and mutual respect.

THE POSITION

The Communications Director reports to the Assistant City Manager and serves as a member of the City's management team. The Director acts as the City's Public Information Officer and functions as the primary link between city government and





the community's residents. The Director is responsible for all forms of communication developed by the City and its departments and distributed to city residents, stakeholders, and the news media. This includes oversight of the City's website, the production of all printed materials for the City by in-house and outside vendors, and coordination of the City's local cable television broadcasts. The Director also provides creative support to other city departments concerning publications, graphic presentations, speech writing, and other forms of communication. The Communications Director oversees a Department of seven full-time employees (Management Assistant, Public Information Specialist, Webmaster, Video Production Specialist, and three Television Camera Operators) with a Fiscal Year 2006 Operating budget of \$764,000.

CURRENT ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

Some of the projects and priorities that will demand the immediate and near-future attention of the new Communications Director include:

- The City is breaking ground on a new public safety building that will include a new broadcast center. The new Director will play an integral role in the development of this new broadcast center and its programming. The Communications Department is currently responsible for the cable television broadcasts of city council meetings.

- City of Surprise website – The Communications Director serves as the official webmaster for the City's website. He/she will be responsible for the ongoing development and operation of the website, developing new and innovative ways of providing timely information to the community's rapidly-growing populace. This will include the implementation of streaming video on the website. Also being implemented on-line is E-Commerce (City Store). The new Director will seek creative ways of expanding this program to provide a customer-friendly means of making available City merchandise to Surprise citizens.
- Growth – With the City averaging about 20,000 newcomers each year, and without any daily community newspaper, it is of the utmost importance for the Communications Department to keep the community well-informed. Distributing information given these times of rapid change, particularly in the areas of transportation and public safety, is paramount. This is a wonderful opportunity for an innovative professional to be involved in a variety of different things, allowing the new Director to leave his/her mark on how things are done in an ever-changing environment.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is an experienced communications professional who has exceptional leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills and possesses broad experience in public information programs and practices, preferably in a local government setting. As the Communications Director serves as the official spokesperson for the City and its departments, interacts with members of the public, community groups, local media and other external organizations and agencies, and works closely with the City's elected council representatives, the highest level of political acumen is absolutely vital. As this position provides management oversight of a small department, successful candidates will be proactive with a "roll-up-your-sleeves" attitude in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the City. Experience in website design is highly desirable; working knowledge of a cable television broadcast center is considered a plus. Additionally, the new Communications Director should be experienced in strategic planning to develop plans and objectives to meet the long-range goals of the City Council. A Bachelor's degree in communications, marketing, journalism, public relations, public administration, political science or closely related field is expected, or any equivalent combination of experience or training that provides the knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the work.

Substantial relevant experience in a supervisory capacity as a department head or high-level assistant is also required. A Master's degree is preferred. Possession of a valid Arizona Driver's License is required.

Visit the City of Surprise website at www.surpriseaz.com

PERSONALITY/MANAGEMENT STYLE

Other skills and traits that are beneficial include:

- Outstanding communicator, both written and oral; exceptional interpersonal skills
- Politically sensitive and aware without being political
- Highest level of personal integrity and honesty
- Creative, collaborative, and customer-service oriented
- Welcomes a challenge; hands-on orientation while simultaneously empowering staff
- Flexible and adaptable in an environment of constant change
- Strategic orientation – Able to develop a communications plan for the City
- Sense of humor
- Excellent organizational skills

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The salary range for the Communications Director position is **\$71,432 - \$94,290**. Appointment within the range will depend on the qualifications of the successful candidate. The City offers a competitive benefit package that includes:

- Arizona State Retirement System
- City contributes to health, dental and vision coverage for employee and dependents (fully paid for employee; significant City contribution for employee and family)
- Annual leave, 11 paid holidays and paid sick leave with year-end cash-out option
- Tuition reimbursement up to \$1,800
- Voluntary ICMA 457 deferred compensation plan is available
- Life insurance
- Longevity pay following eight years of service
- Flexible spending account (IRS Section 125)
- Relocation assistance

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

To be considered for this challenging and rewarding career opportunity, please submit your cover letter, resume, list of three work-related references and current salary by **Friday, February 17, 2006**.

Resume should reflect years and months of positions held, as well as size of staff and budgets you have managed. Forward your materials to:



Stuart Satow
CPS Executive Search
241 Lathrop Way
Sacramento, CA 95815
Tel: (916) 263-1401
Fax: (916) 561-7205

E-mail: resumes@cps.ca.gov
Website: www.cps.ca.gov/search

Following the final filing date, resumes will be screened in relation to the criteria outlined in this brochure. Candidates deemed to have the most relevant background will be invited to participate in a preliminary screening interview with the consultants by early March. The City will then select semi-finalists to participate in City interviews in late March. An appointment is expected by May, after follow-up interviews with finalists and extensive reference/background checks to be coordinated with the candidates. For additional information about this opportunity please contact Stuart Satow.

